

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6245

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, January 17, 2006

**Title:** AN ACT Relating to hosting a national conference of statewide elected officials

**Brief Description:** Raising funds for hosting a national conference of statewide elected officials.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kastama, Roach, Pflug, Parlette, Shin and Kohl-Welles: by request of Lieutenant Governor

**Brief History:** Read first time 01/10/2006

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: January 10, 2006 ; 1/17/06 [DPS, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6245 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Fairley, Haugen, Kline, McCaslin and Mulliken.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Benton.

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Background:** State ethics laws prohibit state officers and state employees from soliciting or accepting gifts under circumstances where it could be reasonably expected that the gifts would influence their votes, actions or official judgment, or be considered as part of a reward for action or inaction. State officers are defined for these purposes as executive, legislative and judicial officers and employees of the state, except for employees of the superior courts.

Some activities undertaken by some state officers and employees under certain conditions are exempt from the solicitation prohibition. Examples of allowed solicitations include those for charitable contributions for state capitol historic furnishings preservation and for restoration of the state legislative building. In 2003, a presumption of exemption was made for soliciting gifts to host a national legislative association as approved by both the chief clerk of the house and the secretary of the senate.

Limitations are also placed on gifts of a non-influential nature. Generally, gifts may not be accepted that have an aggregate value of \$50 or more during any calendar year from any single source.

The annual conference of the national lieutenant governors' association was slated to be held in New Orleans in 2006. Due to the devastation left in the wake of hurricane Katrina, an alternate site is required. At the official behest of the members of the association, Lieutenant

Governor, Brad Owen, agreed to assist New Orleans by hosting the 2006 national lieutenant governors' associations' annual conference in Seattle, Washington.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** An additional presumption of non-violation of the solicitation and gift prohibitions is designated for the purpose of hosting an official conference of the national lieutenant governors' association to be held in the year 2006, in Seattle, Washington.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill is limited to the 2006 national conference of lieutenant governors' association . It does not make a permanent presumption of non-violation of the solicitation and gift provisions for the hosting of the national conferences of all other statewide elected officials as did the original bill.

The emergency clause is changed to mirror the constitutional provision. It does not recite a reason for declaring an emergency beyond the constitutional language.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** The National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) brought 11 million dollars into the Seattle economy. The lieutenant governors' national conference was to have been held in New Orleans, but the hurricane made that impossible this year. The emergency clause is needed for this bill because the conference is to be held this July. The members of the executive ethics board are in favor of a bill.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Brian Hatfield and Antonio Sanchez, office of the Lieutenant Governor

CON: None.

OTHER: Susan Harris, Executive Ethics Board